

# Making Your Financial Institution Dementia Friendly

There are many ways in which you may become dementia friendly.

Here are a some suggestions:

## Customer Service Strategies:

- Watch for the 10 warning signs of dementia
- Provide clients with a friendly, relaxed greeting
- Make good eye contact, speak clearly and concisely.
- Avoid jargon words when possible
- Be patient and allow plenty of time for questions & answers
- If the client needs help, ask if there is someone you can call who might be able to assist
- Understand that math computation skills and advanced concepts may be challenging
- It can be helpful to provide instructions in writing
- Be watchful for confusion at the ATM, drive up windows and automated services
- Provide a quiet place for individual consultation
- Be sure there is ample seating in waiting areas
- Understand that hearing and vision impairment can increase confusion
- Dementia impacts judgement - a client may divulge PIN numbers or account information to strangers
- Make an effort to become acquainted with a client's Power or Attorney, Guardian, or Care Partner
- Consult with legal & financial expert regarding Power of Attorney and Guardianship protocols

## Environmental Considerations:

Floors:

- Furnishings contrast with walls for easy visibility
- Open walking space clear of obstacles and clutter
- Floor plan with simple, clear walking routes

Avoid:

- Dark colored floor mats
- Carpets with bold patterns
- Highly reflective or slippery floor surface

Lighting:

- Indirect lighting for reduced glare
- Avoid areas of dark shadow or bright glare
- Reflections from windows and mirrors can cause confusion and disorientation
- When seating a client with dementia, position them facing away from reflective surfaces, glare, or visual stimulation

Signage:

- Simple signs with clear, essential information
- Use universal symbols when possible (ex: arrows)
- Signage should be displayed at eye level whenever possible
- Glass doors clearly marked
- Font on documents and signage is clear and large enough to read easily
- Doors clearly marked with simple signage / symbols

#### Acoustics:

- Minimize loud, noisy environments. Sound absorbing materials are helpful.
- Provide a quiet seating area away from noisy lobbies, or street noise
- Alarms, chimes and bells can cause anxiety and confusion

#### Communication Techniques:

- Speak to the person with dementia, not the care partner, whenever possible
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Pay attention to your body language, tone, volume, pace of speech
- Use shorter sentences
- Avoid using jargon or slang phrases
- Use closed-ended questions / offer simple choices for answers
- Make eye contact
- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Be patient and flexible
- Avoid arguing or correcting

#### Employee Support Options:

- Promote awareness of the 10 Warning Signs
- Host a “Dementia & Your Community” customer service training program
- Recognize and support employees who are also family caregivers by developing care policy guidelines and procedures
- Provide Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline 800.272..3900 for dementia support, resources and education

#### Resources:

Alzheimer’s Association MA / NH Chapter: 24/7 Helpline (800) 272-3900

Dementia Friendly America [www.dfamerica.org](http://www.dfamerica.org)

Boston Alzheimer’s Initiative (617) 635-3992

Dementia Friendly MA [www.dfmassachusetts.org](http://www.dfmassachusetts.org)



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